

# German Blunders Avoided by Allies Here

**To Supply Authentic Information, Not to Carry on Propaganda, the Function of Bureaus Established in This Country by France and England**

By F. CUNLIFFE-OWEN.

**L**ORD ROBERT CECIL, when called upon in the House of Commons the other day in his capacity as Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to make the grant of passports for the United States conditional upon east iron pledges to abstain from public speaking while on this side of the Atlantic, deprecated the idea of instituting any such species of preventive censorship upon British citizens in a friendly country.

Lord Roberts's judicious refusal to be a party to the institution of a preventive censorship upon the utterances of his countrymen visiting the United States must not be misconstrued into anything in the nature of official approval of so-called propagandists. From the very outset of the war four years ago France and Great Britain have been strongly opposed to everything savoring of propaganda in the United States. The two Powers in question were fortunate in being represented at the time by a couple of Ambassadors at Washington possessed of an altogether exceptional understanding of American life and conditions. This was particularly so in the case of Jean Jules Jusserand, who has been in charge of the interests of France in the United States for over fifteen years, and as such is looked up to by all his colleagues on the banks of the Potomac as the dean of their corps. It has often been said of him that he knows more about the American people than they do themselves, and this is borne out by his writings.

## British Literary Lights Shut Off.

Ambassador Jusserand and his English colleague, the late Sir Cecil Spring Rice, realized from the outset that the people of the United States would be disposed to resent anything in the nature of propaganda in the light of a reflection upon their education and intelligence. It is all very well to lack information about this or that question, especially if it relates to foreign countries. But the assumption that one is ignorant about the matter is offensive. Americans are always willing to learn. But they do not relish the imputation of being fools, and that is what propaganda amounts to.

A few weeks after the beginning of the war a whole shipload of British literary lights, of varying degrees of effluency, sailed from Liverpool with the self-imposed mission of laying before the American people, by means of lecturing tours, the rights of England and the wrongs of Germany in this titanic conflict. Their voyage did not receive any countenance whatsoever from the English Government. The ocean liner on its arrival at Quarantine in New York was boarded by two or three personal emissaries of Sir Cecil Spring Rice, who appealed to the patriotism of the missionaries to abandon their project, as calculated to do infinitely more harm than good, and urged them to return home by the very next boat; above all, to abstain from public speaking. To their credit be it said that they yielded to the Ambassador's solicitations, on the ground that he possessed a knowledge and an appreciation of American conditions just then to which they could lay no claim. Nearly the entire party sailed back to Liverpool before the end of the week, and the very few who remained refrained from speaking, and only stayed on to learn.

## Allies' Policy Justified.

In other instances Sir Cecil was not so fortunate. Men came from England who would not listen to warnings, and whose indiscretions of speech and tactlessness of manner were rendered the more troublesome because of the intimation which they sought to convey, that

they had been commissioned by their Government, which was of course entirely contrary to the fact. They were refused recognition at the Embassy, and not only British Government officials but also their unofficial countrymen in America gave public expression to their disapproval by holding aloof from them. Much the same measures were adopted by the French Embassy in analogous cases.

It may be recalled that the course pursued by Ambassador Jusserand and by Sir Cecil Spring Rice with regard to propaganda was assailed in Parliament in London, in the two chambers of the National Legislature in Paris and by certain organs of the French and English press, which failed to appreciate the peculiarities of the American character. Indeed both the French and the English envoys were compared to their disadvantage with the Kaiser's agents in this country, who were spending millions on propaganda. But events have entirely justified the policy first inaugurated by Ambassador Jusserand, and which, followed by Sir Cecil Spring Rice, has since been pursued by his successor, Lord Reading, by the High Commissioner of France, André Tardieu, and by his able coadjutor and principal representative in America, Edouard de Billy.

## Dernburg's Mission Failed.

Four years ago, at the beginning of the war, popular sentiment in this country was pretty equally divided with regard to the belligerents. The German American was looked upon as a valuable citizen and the commercial and industrial relations of the United States with Germany were very extensive and very intimate. By the time that the Lusitania was torpedoed American sympathy for Germany had dwindled from 50 per cent. to 10 per cent., and when some months later President Wilson found himself compelled by the requirements of the national honor and of national interest to throw down the gauntlet to the Kaiser the entire people of the United States with a few miserable exceptions were at the back of their Chief Magistrate, and sympathy for Germany in America had gone by the board.

While of course much of this loss of American sympathy for Germany was due to her atrocious treatment of Belgium and of the invaded districts of France, there is no doubt that the alienation was very largely brought about by the characteristically tactless, brutal and therefore offensive methods of Teuton propaganda in the United States. The recent disclosures revealing the vast sums of money recklessly spent in futile en-

deavors to influence the public through the press show how very little Count Bernstorff, Dr. Dernburg, Dr. Albert and that pseudo noble Franz Rintelen ever understood the American people.

Dernburg, before he returned here shortly after the beginning of the war, was accounted a clever man, in fact one of the ablest of the Kaiser's Ministers of State, who had in his younger days received the greater part of his business training in Wall Street, New York. Yet as a propagandist he was a complete failure, and instead of winning friends for his native land he made enemies. His methods were signalized by characteristically Teuton tactlessness and brutality, and even when endeavoring to persuade men to his way of thinking he repelled them by his affectation of superior intelligence and knowledge. He gave offense even to Americans of German origin by his boorish manner and presumptuous utterances, and on one occasion when expressing to one of the foremost of German American bankers my amazement at the ignorance of American life and conditions displayed by the Berlin Government in confiding its interests in the United States to such men as Bernstorff and Dernburg, who, by the bye, were always fighting with one another, the financier bitterly described them with the expressive German word as a "Grobian" and a "Trottel" (a boor and a nincompoop).

## French Bureau of Information.

While France and Great Britain thus wisely abstained from anything in the nature of propaganda, they in deference to the suggestions of sagacious American friends established in the United States what may be described as a Government service of information, the credit for the formation of which belongs mainly to André Tardieu, who, formerly a Captain of Chasseurs and on the staff of Marshal Joffre, has now become a member of the Cabinet of Premier Clemenceau and a full fledged Minister of State in charge of France's relations with America. A bureau was organized in New York as part and parcel of the High Commission, and was placed by Tardieu under the immediate direction of Stephane Lauzanne, editor in chief of the *Matin*, with Marcel Knecht as his principal lieutenant. Their task was not to undertake anything in the nature of propaganda but merely to furnish information concerning France's course in the present war. They have done this only on invitation. That is to say, when newspapers, serial publications, educational institutions, &c., found themselves in need of explana-

**More Enemies for Germany the Only Fruit of the Tactless Methods and the Millions Used by Bernstorff and Dernburg in America**

tion and enlightenment concerning this or that matter in France, military, naval, political, administrative or economic, they knew that they could apply to the information bureau of the High Commission of France at the Vanderbilt Hotel in New York, and that in response to their request all the necessary data of an officially authentic nature would be at once furnished to them.

## Lauzanne Qualified for Task.

Lauzanne and Knecht were particularly well qualified for the task. Both have seen a good deal of active service at the front in the present war during the better part of two years, taking part in the battle of the Marne and in most of the fighting from the beginning of August, 1914, until the fall of 1916. Both have a perfect mastery of English. Lauzanne, who is the nephew, adopted son and principal heir of the celebrated correspondent of the *London Times* in France, O. de Blowitz, nicknamed "the Ambassador of the Times," acquired his remarkable knowledge of English while representing his paper, the *Paris Matin*, in London, having his headquarters in the office of the *Thunderer*, owing to the interchange of its cable services and news with the *Matin*. As for Marcel Knecht, he is, like that orator and French statesman Franklin Bouillon, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, a graduate of the University of Cambridge.

Naturally advantage has been taken of their knowledge of English to ask them to speak occasionally, usually at private entertainments and at educational institutions. But they have only done this in response to pressing invitations and with a certain amount of reluctance, looking upon their mission primarily to keep authentic and semi-official news and information on tap, at the disposal of the American press, of the chambers of commerce, &c. They have fulfilled their task with so much efficiency and above all with so much tact that they have never laid themselves open to the imputation of propagandism, even on the part of the foes of France, and have become so indispensable to the intimate intercourse of this country with France that a movement has been started in America to convert their bureau from a mere temporary war mission into a permanent institution, to be retained even after the restoration of peace.

## Great Britain's Representative.

Great Britain was quick to follow the example of France in establishing an official bureau of information in America, with headquarters in New York, at 511 Fifth avenue, under the direction of Geoffrey Butler, fellow and librarian of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, lecturer on international law and diplomacy of that university, president of its union and incidentally monopolizer of most of its honors in the year of his graduation.

He, too, like his French colleagues, Lauzanne and Knecht, fulfils his task with so much tact and such thorough understanding of American susceptibility and prejudices that his bureau has become indispensable, and like that of the French should be maintained after the war. He has an able assistant in Henry A. Goode, who is well qualified for the work by the experience which he acquired during a residence of several years in the United States prior to the war.

Quite recently the Italian Government has started a bureau of information on the same lines in New York under the direction of a distinguished Roman journalist, Baron Augusto Ferrero, assistant editor of *La Tribuna*, one of the leading organs of the Eternal City. These bureaus should be encouraged, since everything calculated to spread knowledge in America concerning those nations associated with us in the present war cannot fail to be of benefit to the people of the United States.

